# THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS A guide for teachers

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# **GETTING STARTED WITH THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)**

# What are the SDGs?

If you made a list of goals to make the whole world a better place, what would be on it? Ending poverty? Tackling climate change and ensuring sustainable consumption? Achieving gender equality? What would be your priorities, and why?

The SDGs are a set of goals and targets aimed at making the world a better place. People everywhere face significant social, economic, environmental and political challenges at both a local and a global level. However, there is hope for the future. All the member states of the United Nations (UN) have committed to 17 goals, which, if achieved, will make the world's environments, economies and societies significantly better by 2030.

'Ours can be the first generation to end poverty – and the last generation to address climate change before it is too late.' Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon



The SDGs, also known as the Global Goals, have ambitious aims including: ending poverty and hunger, achieving gender equality, improving the quality of education for all children, and taking action to protect the climate and environment. These goals apply to all people, young and old, in the UK and in every one of the 193 countries that signed up to them in 2015.

One of the main differences between the SDGs and their predecessors, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), is that the SDGs focus on domestic as well as international issues, in all countries. It is ultimately the responsibility of governments to ensure their countries move towards the targets set out in the goals. However, we can all play an important part in achieving them, both as individual citizens and in partnership with others, by becoming more aware of the issues and acting for change.

For more information, see *Spotlight on the SDGs* (pp. 18–21).

# About this guide

This guide supports teachers and educators working with young people to deepen their understanding of education *about* and *for* the SDGs and to see how global citizenship education (GCE) approaches and methodologies can underpin good practice.

The guide also explores the benefits and challenges of using the SDG framework with learners in schools. We recognise that educators are likely to be in different places with their engagement with the SDGs and GCE, so while this guide is designed to be introductory, it also signposts ways in which more experienced practitioners can develop their thinking and understanding further.

Ideally, schools would take a whole-school approach to the SDGs, embedding their themes across the curriculum and the life of the school, empowering young people to take action for them, and supporting wider community engagement. However, this guide recognises that this may not always be feasible and aims to support learning and thinking about the SDGs, and acting on them, in a range of school contexts. Practical advice, activity ideas, case studies and useful links and resources are provided to inspire and support educators with a rich breadth of ways in which learners can engage with the SDGs. The guide also serves as a useful stimulus for professional development, linking to educational priorities such as values, curriculum development and working with the local community.

Oxfam believes that engaging with local and global issues such as those encompassed by the SDGs is not just essential for creating a fairer and more sustainable world, but that it is beneficial and motivational for young people, their teachers and their communities.

# EDUCATION ABOUT AND FOR THE SDGS

## Why are the SDGs relevant for schools?

The SDG framework is a useful and accessible starting point for developing a GCE approach and embedding a more global ethos into any school or organisation. The SDGs are a helpful tool for enhancing existing curricula and engaging the whole school community (including parents and governors), as well as for collaborating with other groups and organisations to consider the relationship between the local and the global.

The 17 goals encourage young people to learn and think critically about real-world issues and to take action in response to their learning. The SDGs engage learners with pressing national and global issues that often transcend country borders and affect us all. Young people are growing up in a world that is flooded with information, opinions, 'alternative' facts

and 'fake' news. It is, therefore, essential that learners have access to education, evidenced information and 'real' news that enable them to engage with, consider and understand global issues.

The SDG framework can support a more critical and engaged approach towards learning. It is useful to differentiate between education *about* the SDGs and education *for* the SDGs. The SDG topics and themes can be linked to all curriculum subjects and areas (education *about*). There are also opportunities to move from learning and thinking to taking action for sustainable development and well-being, whether at a school, local community or global-linking level (education *for*).

Understanding the personal behaviours and societal systems that need to be changed to meet SDG targets, such as halving global food waste (SDG 12), is a

It is essential that learners have access to education, evidenced information and 'real' news that enable them to engage with, consider and understand global issues.

fascinating way of bringing values, ethics and human rights into the classroom. When exploring aspects of education *for* the SDGs, it is useful to consider the difference between personal action and action in relation to wider society, such as by influencing laws, business practice or politics. For example, reducing energy consumption is partly within our personal power as individuals (for instance, by turning lights off), but partly in the power of legislators (for instance, if they compel energy companies to reduce their use of fossil fuels). Many businesses are voluntarily taking action for the SDGs; however, more could be achieved through changes in legislation. In some countries, businesses are obliged to consider the interests of their workers and other stakeholders. For example, codetermination laws in Germany give workers the right to participate in the management of the companies they work for.

SDG 4, Target 7 explicitly recognises the need for education for sustainable development and global citizenship:

'By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.'

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that every child has a right to participation, a right to express their views, to be heard and to take part in decisions that affect them.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 42% of the world's population is under 25, so it is not surprising that in recent years the Department for International Development (DFID) has emphasised the importance of putting young people 'at the heart of development'.<sup>2</sup> Global competence is also now included in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (DECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).<sup>3</sup>

Education *about* and *for* the SDGs can support young people in bringing about change in the world, both now and in the future. The school climate strikes around the world are examples of young people learning about the serious challenge of climate change and deciding to take action. That said, there is a careful balance to be struck between emphasising the need for action and clarifying who is responsible for making changes. It is important not to place too heavy a burden on the shoulders of the young – these global challenges will only be solved if all generations work together now, and big business and governments have a crucial role to play.

# Benefits to learners, teachers, schools, communities and the wider world

The SDG framework is an engaging and powerful way of linking to a range of complex global issues and questions that learners might wish to address. Here are some reasons for inspiring young people through the goals:

#### Benefits to learners

- Supports the acquisition of core skills and competences, especially those related to carrying out research (qualitative and quantitative); developing, presenting and responding to informed arguments; and building agency.
- The interdisciplinary nature of the SDGs helps learners to see the links between different subjects and skills, which in turn can support them to thrive in a fast-changing labour market.
- Motivates and enhances learning across the curriculum because the themes require creative and innovative engagement and are relevant to the real world.
- Acquaints learners with the systems used in national and global governance and the concept of international law (with its opportunities and limitations).
- Empowers learners to make sense of the diverse world and local communities in which they live; and to participate in and have a say in decisions that affect them.
- Deepens understanding of social science, scientific and mathematical concepts and processes by applying them to real-life contexts and data.
- Develops critical thinking and empowers learners to confidently challenge inaccurate or false assertions made by others for example, in the media.
- Can support learners to feel that positive steps can be and are being taken to address global challenges and that everyone has a part to play in making progress.

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#### Benefits to teachers and schools

- Provides a unifying, golden thread for schools that would like to place values, human rights and global competences at the very heart of learning. The wide-ranging, mutually supportive and interdependent nature of the SDGs make them an excellent tool for examining and developing whole-school curricula, school development plans and mission statements.
- Promotes a life-long approach to learning and the need for everyone to work together. Teachers and learners can discover more about the SDGs in partnership.
- Offers a useful tool for supporting primary–secondary or learning-stage transition – for example, through collaborative global learning projects.
- Can promote the value of diversity within and beyond the school.
- Supports schools to deliver on curriculum priorities in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (see p.11 for further details).
- Provides opportunities to explore controversial issues, such as migration or religious tension, in appropriate ways (see Oxfam's *Teaching Controversial Issues* guide for further guidance and some practical classroom activities).<sup>4</sup>

'You may never know what results come of your actions, but if you do nothing, there will be no results.' Mohandas Gandhi

- Helps schools to deliver existing projects, programmes and awards, such as Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning (CCGL), Eco-Schools, Fairtrade Schools, the Times Educational Supplement Sustainable Schools Award, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Green Ambassadors, the International Schools Award and UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Award, some of which have direct links to the SDG themes and targets. See *Further resources and support* and *Other useful websites* (pp. 29-30).
- Supports linking with teachers around the world through SDG-focused projects, programmes and movements such as the #TeachSDGs movement, the World's Largest Lesson or CCGL. See *Further resources and support* and *Other useful websites* (pp. 29-30).

#### Benefits to communities and the wider world

- An excellent framework for addressing controversial and complex local, national and international issues, especially those that present a global–local tension.
- Sharing learning about the SDGs can engage and strengthen relationships with parents, communities and businesses and between these different groups.
- Can provide a context for, and link with, local community or business engagement projects, such as zero-waste initiatives, refugee support groups or biodiversity action plans.
- Raises awareness of and support for local, national or global activities, such as pre-existing and ongoing community engagement, to achieve progress towards the SDG targets.





# Global citizenship education (GCE) and the SDGs

We recommend a GCE approach to engaging learners with the SDGs because it includes elements such as critical thinking, an understanding of sustainable development and a respect for human rights, as outlined in SDG 4, Target 7.

The SDGs link well with the knowledge and understanding, skills and values and attitudes outlined in GCE. GCE enables learners to recognise the complexity of global issues and link the local with the global. It uses a range of participatory teaching and learning approaches, including discussion and debate, role play, ranking exercises and communities of enquiry, <sup>5</sup> all of which can support teaching and learning both *about* and *for* the SDGs.

Although the GCE approach offers activities and methods that can be used to support engagement with the SDGs on a one-off basis, it is not an additional subject area but rather an overarching approach to classroom practice that is best embedded across the curriculum and life of the school (see Oxfam's *Education for Global Citizenship* guide).<sup>6</sup>

Knowledge and understanding	Skills	Values and attitudes
<ul> <li>Social justice and equity</li> <li>Identity and diversity</li> <li>Globalisation and interdependence</li> <li>Sustainable development</li> <li>Peace and conflict</li> <li>Human rights</li> <li>Power and governance</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Critical and creative thinking</li> <li>Empathy</li> <li>Self-awareness and reflection</li> <li>Communication</li> <li>Cooperation and conflict resolution</li> <li>Ability to manage complexity and uncertainty</li> <li>Informed and reflective action</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Sense of identity and self-esteem</li> <li>Commitment to social justice and equity</li> <li>Respect for people and human rights</li> <li>Value diversity</li> <li>Concern for the environment and commitment to sustainable development</li> <li>Commitment to participation and inclusion</li> <li>Belief that people can bring about change</li> </ul>

# **KEY ELEMENTS FOR DEVELOPING ACTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP**

# A Learn-Think-Act approach to the SDGs

A Learn-Think-Act approach complements the SDG themes because of its explicit recognition of the relationship between understanding, reflection and action (see Figure 1). Alongside a rigorous development of knowledge and understanding of global issues, such an approach includes opportunities for young people to foster new skills, think critically, and act and reflect effectively as agents of change. It also enables learners to explore,

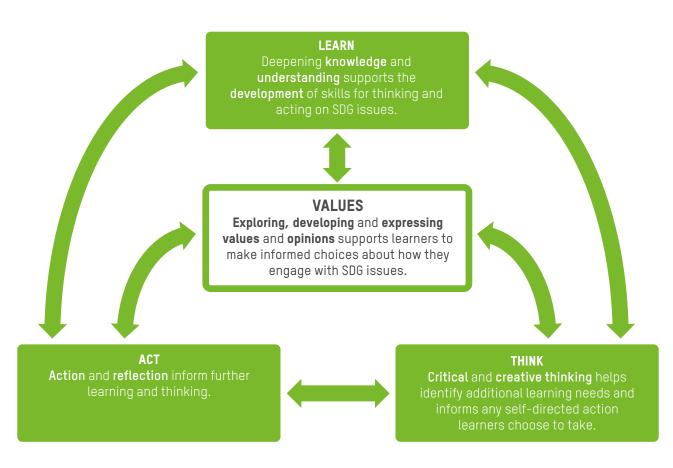
develop and express their own values and opinions, while listening respectfully to others' viewpoints. This is an important step towards learners making informed choices about how they engage with global issues.

The SDG themes lend themselves well to both independent and group research and reflection, and they encourage informed and responsible action at local, national and global levels. That said, action can take many different forms, and it is important to remember that the SDGs are intended to be the responsibility of governments and all levels of society in all countries – not just the responsibility of young people. In the case of young people, sometimes the 'action' element might be to decide to learn more or to reframe a key question for further research. 'We cannot tire or give up. We owe it to the present and future generations of all species to rise up and walk!' Wangari Maathai

For strong educational outcomes and meaningful engagement with the SDGs, it is important that educators look for activities that support the development of skills such as critical and creative thinking rather than tokenistic activities.<sup>7</sup> There also needs to be consideration of *how* young people learn about these issues: what affects their opinions and

behaviours, and how a more critical and engaged approach towards learning can be achieved.<sup>8</sup> GCE is at the interface between learning, thinking and action, with values at the heart. Developing intrinsic or compassionate values is recognised as an important part of supporting learners to solve complex, 'bigger-than-self' problems like those outlined in the SDGs.<sup>9</sup> Figure 1 illustrates how learning and thinking about a global issue can inspire action, while taking action often motivates learners to develop their knowledge and understanding of an issue and to think critically about both the issue and their choices of action.

# FIGURE 1: LEARN-THINK-ACT FRAMEWORK



# Engaging with the goals

Taking a whole-school approach to GCE and the SDGs is an effective way to sustainably support many common school priorities, such as developing core values and learner voice. An SDG-themed day-, week- or term-long activity can be a good starting point for motivating and uniting the school community (parents, governors and local community groups and organisations) behind a common mission. Meanwhile, pairs or clusters of schools more familiar with the SDGs might work collaboratively to bring about change related to specific goals in their local settings.

The SDGs consist of a range of ambitious and urgent targets (169 in all). The annual *Sustainable Development Goals Report* highlights the scale of the task humanity needs to engage in to reach these targets.<sup>10</sup> Sometimes the data behind the SDGs, just like stories in the media, can be upsetting and disempowering for young people, making them wonder what can possibly be done in the face of environmental and human disaster.

It is important, therefore, to engage with the SDGs in ways that combat the negativity of some of the stories, statistics and images young people see in the news, at the same time acknowledging the challenges faced by our planet and society. There are many positive stories of progress and change that do not make the headlines, and educators can use these to challenge misconceptions. For example, in 1800, 44% of all children around the world died before their fifth birthday, but in 2016 that figure was closer to 4%. In 1900, only one country (out of 195) gave women equal voting rights to men, but in 2017 that had increased to 193.<sup>11</sup> In 2017, greenhouse gas emissions in the UK had fallen by 43% compared to 1990 levels.<sup>12</sup> Resources such as Gapminder<sup>13</sup> demonstrate that the world is not always as bad as people think, and with greater empathy and increased action, there is hope.



# Linking to the curriculum

There are many ways in which the SDGs link to the school and curriculum context in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. To varying degrees, all national curricula expect local and global issues to be addressed and expect educators to provide a wide range of opportunities for doing so. The importance of developing knowledge and skills connected to real-world situations to prepare young people for the complexities of life in the 21st century is well recognised and the SDGs can support this process.

## **CURRICULUM LINKS**

England	The SDGs, like GCE, provide schools with the opportunity to provide learning experiences which are real, relevant and fit for the 21st century. There are opportunities across the curriculum at each key stage. The SDGs can also support whole-school priorities such as Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development and British values, as well as linking with specific subjects such as Citizenship, Geography, Science and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). There are also links through Ofsted's Education inspection framework (to be implemented in September 2019), whereby providers are evaluated to the extent to which learners are equipped 'to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society'.
Northern Ireland	The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people as contributors to society and the environment. It offers considerable flexibility and scope to teach the SDGs through a global learning approach. Themes such as 'interdependence', rights', 'social justice' and 'active participation' are minimum requirements in some learning areas, while overarching key elements such as citizenship, sustainable development and media awareness inform and guide the minimum requirements for all subjects and areas of learning. The curriculum also promotes a connected learning and thematic planning approach which offers great scope to teach the SDGs meaningfully through existing topics, while developing cross-curricular skills, thinking skills and personal capabilities.
Scotland	Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) supports four capacities including 'Responsible citizens' and 'Effective contributors'. Global Citizenship is a cross-cutting theme in the CfE –many Experiences and Outcomes refer to SDG themes – and interdisciplinary work is encouraged. The SDGs provide rich, real-world contexts for the priority areas of Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing. The Scottish government entitles all pupils to Learning for Sustainability, which aligns with the SDGs, encompassing GCE, sustainable development education and outdoor learning. Learning for Sustainability is embedded across the Professional Standards of the General Teaching Council Scotland as one of three core themes. 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC) requires all education delivery to be rights-based.
Wales	One of the four purposes of the new Curriculum for Wales 2022, for ages 3-16, is to support young people to be 'ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world'. Schools are challenged to provide opportunities for teachers and learners to consider global issues; make the link between what is personal, local, national and global; engage in culturally diverse experiences; critically evaluate their own values and attitudes; and develop skills that will enable them to challenge injustice, prejudice and discrimination. SDG themes can also be addressed through the Welsh Baccalaureate Global Citizenship Challenge and guidelines for Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC), which aim to prepare young people for life in the 21st century.

#### **CASE STUDY** MAPPING THE CURRICULUM TO THE SDGs

As a UNICEF Rights Respecting School<sup>14</sup> (Level 2), Admiral Lord Nelson School (ALNS) in Portsmouth has embedded human rights within its school improvement plan and curriculum, and has made them an integral part of its ethos and values. Since 2015, the school has extended and deepened its global learning through engagement with the SDGs. This started with a week-long focus on the goals, which took place through assemblies and lessons across the whole curriculum.

ALNS has found that the SDGs and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are highly complementary, and, as a result, work on one has often involved work on the other. The school has mapped the UNCRC across all curriculum subject areas and, in some cases, has also mapped the SDGs. The school now focuses on a different goal each fortnight, which informs tutor time and assemblies. For example, the Philosophy, Ethics and Religious Education curricula map all subject themes to the UNCRC and the SDGs.

At the heart of the pedagogical approach to global learning at ALNS is the idea of responsibility. To learn about the global issues connected to the SDGs is one thing, but it is also important that learners have the capacity and opportunity to initiate change, as captured by the following quotation in the 'Social Responsibility' section of the ALNS website: 'At ALNS we believe in taking ACTION. We don't just talk about things that concern us; we try to do something about it. We want to make a difference.'

#### CASE STUDY EMBEDDING GLOBAL LEARNING ACROSS THE SCHOOL

tomorrow's

reality.

Malala Yousafzai

Global learning and the SDGs are embedded in the curriculum at St Kieran's Primary School in Belfast. Teachers have been supported to see how global learning is entwined across the curriculum and is of specific relevance in Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU), World Around Us (WAU) For and Religious Education. Global learning has been incorporated into the planning of the practical ideas WAU and also has its own dedicated action plan within the School Development Plan.

During a global learning week, each year group or class was asked to explore a specific country and one of the SDGs. Learners thought about the links between their country and the SDG, as well as what they could do to help achieve this goal. For example, P2 looked at the Arctic and SDG 14 (Life below Water). They investigated over-fishing and linked this to literacy. It was a fantastic week of learning, culminating in a special Global Learning Day. The children loved it and can now confidently talk about the SDGs.

to embed the SDGs across the see pp. 22-26

#### Supporting young people to take ownership, have agency and build empathy

Pupil voice and participatory approaches to learning are at the heart of GCE and lend themselves to supporting learners to take action on the SDGs. To involve learners more fully in the process of learning about the SDGs, you could appoint SDG young ambassadors or champions. These ambassadors can 'Let us also support peer-learning programmes. SDG projects and partnerships with others in the school or wider community are more inclusive, empowering and collaborative when make our future the theme or issue is chosen by young people themselves. now, and let us Remember, it is not necessary for teachers and educators to be experts to focus make our dreams

effectively on the SDGs in the classroom or during a whole-school activity. This is because the SDGs lend themselves to educators taking on a facilitating, co-learning and guidance role. Teachers-as-facilitators can support young people to develop the skills, values and competences they require as they carry out research and discover new knowledge for themselves. The SDG themes also offer interesting opportunities for

reverse mentoring (where educators intentionally learn from young people through listening, questioning and observation), big-picture thinking and viewing local actions and causes from a global perspective. Enabling learners to engage with the human stories behind the SDG themes is an important and useful pedagogical strategy – many of the resources recommended at the end of this guide offer links to the stories behind the goals. For example, the documentary 'Survivors' traces the lives of people in Sierra Leone affected by the Ebola crisis (SDG 3: Good health and well-being).<sup>15</sup> Organisations such as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation highlight the realities of the lives of poor people in the UK (SDG 1: No poverty). A global citizenship approach will show how the SDG themes affect everyone, and will encourage learners to explore alternative points of view.

When investigating SDG themes, it is important to reflect upon who is defining the topic and what power issues might be at play. This can lead to interesting questions about the challenges we all face when learning about and acting for the SDGs, and what systemic or behavioural changes need to take place for us to be empowered. This in turn can lead to discussion about the importance of resilience when trying to change things for the better.

#### **CASE STUDY** WALK THE GLOBAL WALK

'Walk the Global Walk'<sup>16</sup> is a three-year EU-funded project led by Tuscany Region and coordinated by Oxfam Italia which focuses on mobilising young people in support of the SDGs. It connects local governments with regional and local communities (school communities and civil society organisations) from 11 European countries, including the UK (Wales and Scotland). The project addresses three of the SDGs (SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities, SDG 13: Climate action and SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions).

In Wales, Carmarthenshire County Council is working in partnership with Dolen Cymru Lesotho to support eight schools (seven secondary and one primary) with the project. Teachers have received training and a dedicated resource pack, and each school has selected learners to be 'Global Goalkeepers' (SDG ambassadors). The role of these ambassadors is to increase awareness of the SDGs in their school and then, with support from the council, lead activities of their choice in the community during European Sustainable Development Week. In June 2019, young people from different schools took part in a walk in the National Botanic Garden of Wales with decision-makers and visiting teachers from Lesotho, to raise awareness of the SDGs and call for action.



#### **CASE STUDY** ADVOCATING FOR A 'QUALITY' EDUCATION

A key factor in the approach to 'Learning for Sustainability' at St Eunan's RC Primary School in Dunbartonshire was to find opportunities for learners to explore values such as speaking out for social justice or equality. Staff have aimed to deepen learners' understanding of themselves and the world around them alongside exploring some of the barriers to equality faced by certain individuals and groups. Learners have also been encouraged to develop advocacy skills, agency and belief in their ability to make a difference.

A focus for the school has been on Article 28 of the UNCRC, which also links to SDG 4 (Quality education). Having learned about the opportunities and benefits of universal access to education and the difficulties in achieving it, learners founded their own campaign: *Education for Every Child Everywhere*.

They set up an online petition, visited local schools and universities, and went to Holyrood to meet MSP John Finnie. Without the careful research, exploration of the issues and emphasis on learner advocacy, the impact of these visits may not have been so profound. Learners became powerful agents for change and a force to be listened to.

In his blog, John Finnie commented: 'Primary 7 of St Eunan's came to the Scottish Parliament because it is a place of power, and they want those in power to act. They have certainly inspired me to redouble my efforts to stop powerful countries like ours sponsoring or supplying the wars that stand between children and the education they deserve.'

*A feeling will not get a child into school. We need to turn our words into actions.* Learner, St Eunan's

See Send My Friend to School for further information, ideas and resources to support learning about and for SDG 4.<sup>17</sup>

## Collaborating with school leadership and the wider community

As you develop your own global outlook – one that ensures different world views are included in all your teaching and learning – you might also like to consider becoming a 'global learning leader' within your school, noting that to be effective and sustainable, leadership involves working collaboratively with others.

The next step to deepening learners' engagement with the SDGs in your setting could be to set up a small working group (for example, of teachers, young people and governors) to discuss how GCE could be embedded across the school. If senior management or other members of staff do not view the SDGs as a school priority, it might be worth emphasising the benefits of engaging with them for schools, such as enhancing pupil voice, leadership and agency (see pp. 6-7).

'It is in your hands to make a difference.'

Although this guide advocates taking a GCE approach in everyday practice, what might be of most interest to school leaders is the way in which the SDG framework can enhance collaborations with local businesses or community organisations, or partnerships with other schools. A school with a good knowledge of the SDGs may well be able to position itself as a leader or 'teaching ambassador' in its local area. For example, a local supermarket might be promoting the practice of recycling plastics or reducing their use, which might tie in with a school project based around SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production). Such a partnership could contribute to a coordinated local area sustainable waste strategy.

There are a variety of charities and groups in the UK offering support for schools and teachers on their SDGthemed global learning journey. You could invite global learning experts into your school, either for teacher training or learner-engagement activities.For example, in England and Wales, Oxfam offers school speakers and continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities as well as support for learners to learn and think about, and act on specific global issues (through Oxfam School Groups). Your local Development Education Centre (DEC) may also offer learning programmes and CPD options (in Scotland, Oxfam works in partnership with the DECs). Funded CPD opportunities are also available through the Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning (CCGL) programme (2018–2021). For more details, see *Further resources and support* (p. 29).

Finally, the SDGs are very useful for supporting school linking at a local, national or global level. For example, some schools have worked in partnership to engage their wider communities to raise awareness and understanding and to take action for specific mutually-agreed SDGs that their learners have studied together.

Others have successfully explored SDG-themed international school-linking projects such as those taking place through programmes such as CCGL. Schools in Hull and Freetown, Sierra Leone, jointly set up an International Pupil Council to give their young people a voice and empower them to take action. Pupils have worked together to learn about and take action for specific SDGs within their own schools, for example to reduce usage of single-use plastic (SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production).



#### **CASE STUDY** SCHOOLS WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP FOR THE SDGS

With funding and support through the CCGL programme, a cluster of 35 schools across Cheshire and six partner schools in Kenya are working together to learn *about* and *for* the SDGs. Led by Alison Hooper, head teacher at Egerton Primary School and a British Council Ambassador, the UK schools have been organised into six hubs by locality, to enable them to engage effectively with their local communities. Each hub has selected one or more of the SDGs to focus on, based on their local context and needs, with learners themselves playing an active role in this. For example, a hub of four schools from rural farming communities around Northwich are exploring responsible consumption and production linked to food, poverty and equality (SDGs 1, 5 and 12). A hub with a challenging socio-economic context has chosen SDG 2 (No hunger). SDGs 4 and 5 (Quality education and Gender equality) will be the focus for the partnership work with the Kenyan schools.

The schools in each hub are planning collaboratively, with the emphasis on enriching and enhancing the existing curriculum and school ethos rather than 'add-on' project work. Engaging with the community is an important aspect, with examples of planned activities including:

- working with the local authority, town council and businesses towards becoming 'zero-waste' consumers and plastic-free schools;
- writing joint letters to their local MPs, detailing key issues in the local area and community (and their ideas for solutions);
- holding celebration events with the local community;
- developing links with organisations active in the community, such as the Salvation Army and Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA); and
- using Philosophy for Children (P4C) and Empathy Lab<sup>18</sup> resources to explore the notion of poverty, its effects on people's lives and possible ways to solve it.

By working together, the schools hope to achieve a high level of collaboration and support, resulting in the development of best practice and opportunities to reflect on their impact and ensure that their work continues to be effective.

#### **CASE STUDY** A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH TO THE SDGS

Since 2015, Torriano Primary School in London has viewed the SDGs as an effective way of developing the curriculum so that it enables learners to explore social and environmental issues of relevance to the common good.

The school devises its own curriculum themes, which are topical, locally relevant and linked to the goals; highlighting universal values such as gender equality, cultural diversity, tolerance and environmental sustainability. Each theme is taught across the curriculum to the whole age range for one year. This approach enables the whole school community to be informed by deep learning, improving their opportunities to help create a more just and sustainable world.

Torriano has involved the community from the start, via its 'Sustainability Task Force' of children and adults. Activities have included helping parents and carers to complete a questionnaire about the SDGs to assess their existing knowledge, and setting homework tasks for them. In the 2016–17 academic year, pupils lobbied the school's leaders to establish a Food Waste Café in the grounds, to raise awareness of (and take action for) SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production). This has enabled them to advocate for change, and reduce food waste and meat consumption. The continuing success of this initiative is due to community engagement, with parents often staffing the café and enthusiastic support from local enterprises.

'If we can run a cafe for our whole school by cooking with all the food that would have been thrown away, then imagine what we could do with all the food thrown away in London! Or the world!' Sustainability Task Force member



#### CASE STUDY MAKING THE LEAP FROM 'CHARITY' TO 'SOCIAL JUSTICE'

Many learners at Ashley High School in Cheshire, a special school for pupils on the autistic spectrum, struggle with seeing things from any point of view other than their own. The school ran a week-long 'Wider Perspectives' Fair Trade project with students from Liverpool Hope University. The aim of the project was to raise awareness of the issue of trade (SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth), not only for learners and staff but for the whole school community.

Learners engaged in various activities around trade, such as investigating the supply chain behind a chocolate bar, with links to Maths, Geography, Citizenship and Religious Education. They then had opportunities to participate in trips and events, including a visit from a banana producer involved in the Fairtrade scheme, which was organised by the school's local Development Education Centre.

Inspired by what they had discovered, learners planned and took part in a 'coffee morning with a conscience', which linked with the school's work on human rights. Planning and organisation of the Fair Trade coffee morning involved preparing posters; dropping leaflets locally; contacting organisations such as Traidcraft and Starbucks; baking cakes; and engaging with parents, visitors and members of the public by: serving on the stalls; acting as 'greeters'; showing people around; and explaining why buying fairly traded products can help farmers and producers at the bottom of the supply chain. At every stage, learners were not only learning and applying their understanding of curriculum subjects, such as Maths and Geography, but were also building up new life and communication skills, as well as developing thinking skills, flexibility of thought, empathy and their ability to see things from a more global perspective.

*Planning for and taking part in our "coffee morning with a conscience" helped students begin to make the leap from a "charity" coffee morning to one of "social justice".* Fiona Lawrenson, Geography Subject Leader.



# Assessing learners' progress and celebrating success

It is worth designing the SDG learning journey so that monitoring can take place both before and after impact and engagement. For example, your learners could move from an early stage of developing knowledge about SDG themes, to thinking critically and identifying interdisciplinary links, and then to considering opportunities for taking self-directed action for the SDGs. Some learning activities might lend themselves to assessment via a before-and-after questionnaire, while others might require an ongoing reflective journal-type tool. Toolkits exist for measuring attitudinal change in global learning, such as *How do we know it's working?* (developed by Reading International Solidarity Centre - RISC)<sup>19</sup> and *Measuring Global Citizenship Education: A collection of practices and tools.*<sup>20</sup>

Recognising and sharing learning and ideas through online platforms, or through show-and-tell events in the community, are useful ways to both celebrate global learning work and enable learners (and educators) to connect with others around the world.

# **SPOTLIGHT ON THE SDGs**

## The SDG framework

The SDGs offer a powerful framework to enable us all to learn and think about how to make the world a better place and to act on this. It is well worth considering them in relation to other United Nations (UN) declarations and commitments, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)<sup>21</sup> or the Paris Climate Change Agreement.<sup>22</sup> The 17 SDGs encompass a wide range of targets and are sometimes loosely grouped into five overarching themes: **people, planet, prosperity, peace** and **partnership.** The goals cover many pressing local and global issues, from ending poverty in all its forms everywhere (SDG 1), to ending hunger and achieving food security and improved nutrition (SDG 2), reducing inequality within and among countries (SDG 10), and taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (SDG 13).

An important fact about the 17 goals is that they are all interrelated and mutually supportive – none of them canbe achieved in isolation, without the support of the other goals. For example, education is covered by SDG 4 (Quality education – 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all')<sup>23</sup> but education – for example, to increase public awareness – is also recognised as a crucial requirement for achieving other goals such as SDG 12 (Responsible production and consumption). In the same way, SDG 5 (Gender equality) focuses on equality and empowerment for women and girls, but gender equality is integral to all of the SDGs.<sup>24</sup>

As well as being universal and interconnected, the SDGs are inclusive. They come with a pledge to 'leave no one behind' – that is, no goal will be deemed to have been met unless it is met for everyone.

#### WHAT IS THE UNITED NATIONS?

The UN and its family of agencies, such as UNESCO, exist to secure international peace, protect human rights and eliminate poverty. The UN is governed by its 193 member states, which work collaboratively to address world challenges, because so many global issues require international coordination and action.

#### WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

There are several definitions of sustainable development, but for the purposes of this guide we have adapted a well-known and widely used one from *Our Common Future* (also known as the Brundtland Report), a report commissioned by the UN in the 1980s.<sup>25</sup> Sustainable development concerns the balance between meeting the needs of people in the present (well-being, health, economic development) without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (that is, preserving ecosystems and natural resources). Sustainable development, therefore, entails environmental progress at the same time as economic, social and political progress. Sustainable development explicitly recognises that the economic, social and environmental dimensions are integrated when addressing problems such as poverty or climate change. Other definitions exist, such as the Sustainable Schools Framework built on the principle of care (of oneself, others and the environment).<sup>26</sup>

## ACTIVITY: EXPLORING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE SDGs (Ages 7+)

**Aim:** This activity enables participants to consider to what extent and how the SDGs are interrelated and mutually supportive.

Resources

- Large sheets of paper
- Sticky notes

#### What to do

- Organise participants into groups of three or four. Ask each group to choose between five and eight of the 17 SDGs (depending on their ability) and to write these spaced out on a large sheet of paper.
- Participants should now work together in their groups to link each of the goals to each of the others through an issue or theme (which can be of global, national and/or local significance) to create a web of links. For example, linking SDG 1 (No poverty) to SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) might result in considering how one benefit of reducing poverty would be an improvement in people's health and well-being.
- Encourage participants to share their reflections using the following prompts: Which of your SDGs do you think are the most important, and why? Do you think this will be true in all countries and communities? Do you think any of the goals can be achieved on their own without the other SDGs?
- Participants could then work together in their groups to rank the selected SDGs in order of importance. Allow time at the end for participants to share their rankings and the reasons for these with other groups.

#### Further ideas

- Choose one of the SDGs, such as Quality education (SDG 4) or Gender equality (SDG 5). Support learners to identify ways in which this goal links to all of the other SDGs.
- As an extension activity, participants could focus on the SDG they deemed to be the most important and find out about its associated targets. Which of these targets do you think are most relevant to your local community and why?
- Use Practical Action's *Global Goals string* and *Who's responsible* activities to help learners make connections between the SDGs and think critically about the relationship between personal action and action relating to wider society.<sup>27</sup>

'Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.'

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan

As part of their Freetown/Hull Connecting Classrooms project, teachers in Sierra Leone explore connections between the SDGs.

# **Measuring progress**

A vital dimension of the SDGs is their measurement using a set of 232 individual indicators. The task of measuring progress (or lack of it) towards the goals is a complex one, but for older learners and teachers it is an interesting aspect of the SDGs to investigate further in terms of the complexity of gathering reliable data.

The SDGs are not legally binding. However, all UN member states have a duty to report on how they are progressing towards the targets and goals. Different governments have responded in different ways – for example, some with clear action plans, others with partial strategies, and others with no coherent plan at all. The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development is the UN body where countries come together to share their experiences and learn about best practice.

The UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development (UKSSD) is a cross-sector network of organisations that have come together to support the UK's implementation and measurement of the SDGs. In 2018, the UKSSD coordinated the report *Measuring up*, involving over 100 organisations (including NGOs and businesses).<sup>28</sup> This report offers a comprehensive account of what is happening for people, the environment and the economy in the UK for each of the SDGs and their targets. It reported: 'Out of 143 relevant targets, UKSSD found that the UK is performing well on 24%, with 57% where there are gaps in policy coverage or performance is not adequate, and 15% where there is little or no policy in place to address the target or the performance is poor'.<sup>29</sup>

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is also responsible for reporting on how the UK is progressing and produces updated reports and data on this. As well as the ONS, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Assembly, Northern Ireland's Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), and civil society groups are monitoring progress in different areas and regions.

You might like to reflect with your learners on the complexity of measuring these goals and their many targets. For example, you could investigate ways in which measuring specific goals and/or targets might be challenging during Geography and Maths sessions. Learners could also consider how scientific innovation (for example, better technology to measure energy use) can improve monitoring processes.

#### **CASE STUDY** INVOLVING LEARNERS IN ASSESSING PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS THE GOALS

Learners at Torriano Primary School in London took part in a focus group on the SDGs, organised by UNICEF UK ahead of the UK government's Voluntary National Review in 2019,<sup>30</sup> which assessed progress made towards the goals and considered what more needs to be done. The objective of the focus group was for learners to share their views on which of the SDGs are the most important, reflect on their learning in school about and for the goals, and make recommendations to the UK government on further action to implement the SDGs and raise awareness of them. Recommendations included increasing the minimum wage, providing electric school buses, creating a single-use plastic tax, putting the SDGs into the curriculum, organising a national SDGs day and developing a phone app which alerts people to progress on the goals.



# Strengths and limitations of the SDGs

Oxfam recommends an investigative approach to global learning and any engagement with the SDGs in the classroom, which includes a period of reflection before any action is taken. The SDGs have many strengths, but also some limitations, and it is important to be aware that there is a corresponding range of perspectives and viewpoints on them. The older your learners are, the more you might want to explore some of the criticisms of the SDGs alongside their strengths. For example, you might consider the criticism that the SDGs are flawed because they shield the world's richest and most powerful organisations from any concrete responsibility. Another potential drawback of the SDGs is that they are very broad. With so many goals (and targets) it is tricky to prioritise the most important. Some people argue that certain targets are overly optimistic and, therefore, unrealistic. Others argue that the SDGs continue to embed economic growth as an assumed priority, rather than social or environmental progress. The Happy Planet Index<sup>31</sup> and Oxfam's Humankind Index<sup>32</sup> use different approaches and indicators to measure what makes a good, happy and sustainable life.

Conversely, there are those who counter these assessments with the argument that any set of global goals would be imperfect but that nonetheless the SDGs are having a significant impact. For example, the SDGs are now being championed on a wide range of levels, from endorsement by celebrities on Twitter, to integration into the investment processes of big businesses and into local community initiatives. New York has become the first major city to declare that it will report directly to the UN on its progress towards relevant SDG targets for 2030.<sup>33</sup> Some countries – for example, Ecuador – are choosing to focus on specific goals and use the SDGs as a vehicle for validating their own priorities and to highlight their work to the rest of the world, rather than to determine new development agendas.

That said, there is widespread recognition that the SDGs are more aspirational than achievable. You may want to explore the aspirational nature of the SDGs and the effectiveness of setting goals with your learners by pointing out that we may not achieve everything, but that goals can help us to take significant steps in the right direction: just because we cannot achieve everything does not mean we should not try to do something.



# **NEXT STEPS**

# Practical ideas for embedding the SDGs across the curriculum

The SDGs offer numerous, diverse opportunities for real-life learning in all subject areas, enabling young people to learn and think about global issues and to take action on them. Here are just a few practical ideas to provide some inspiration. Many of these examples could be easily adapted for younger or older learners. A 2019 report from the National Association for Environmental Education (UK) provides a useful framework outlining possible opportunities for linking the SDGs to the curriculum.<sup>34</sup>



#### Art and Design

- Investigate how global issues and themes linked to the SDGs such as peace, conflict and justice are represented in art. (SDG 16)
- Use art as a means to express opinions, ideas and wishes about the future of our environment taking inspiration from artists such as Banksy, Mathilde Roussel, Moses Ochieng and Marina DeBris. Learners could send their ideas and plans to their local government representative or planning department. (SDGs 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15)

# Citizenship

- Find different quotations about education on the internet and use these to stimulate critical thinking about what it means to have a high-quality, inclusive and equitable education. Learners could carry out an audit of their own school's inclusivity and equity and consider ways to make improvements. (SDGs 4 and 5)
- Explore the 'local in the global'. Carry out a survey in your local community to identify needs and challenges linked to the SDG themes. Go on a walk around your locality and take photographs or draw rough sketches. Alternatively, interview parents or others in the community to find out their concerns. Discuss and decide what the priorities for your community are before considering possible approaches for making positive changes. (All SDGs)
- Think about different ways to make work decent, including pay, health, safety and well-being, gender equality and work-life balance. What similarities and differences might there be between working environments in the UK and other countries? Research ways in which these issues are being addressed for example, through the work of trade unions to uphold labour rights. (SDG 8)
- Investigate how the UN works and what it does. How did it come into being? How do its members make decisions? Do all nations have an equal say? Use role play to debate and try to find solutions to global issues by taking part in a Model UN.<sup>35</sup> (SDG 16)

#### **Computing and ICT**

- Explore the impacts of technology, both positive and negative, on individuals, communities and our planet. For example, consider issues related to the production, consumption and disposal of mobile phones, as well as the current and potentially positive role of technology in raising awareness about the SDGs and addressing global challenges. (SDG 12)
- Develop computational thinking, applications and creativity to understand and tackle real-world challenges. For example, learners could collect and analyse local weather and climate data and use this to inform recommendations for action that could be taken locally to combat climate change. (SDG 13)
- Use different educational software to share thinking and learning about the SDGs. Use virtual classroom tools to enable learners to connect and share their ideas with young people in other parts of the world. (All SDGs)

#### **Design and Technology**

Learners at Presentation College Bray in Ireland used the online game Minecraft to recreate their school in a virtual world and redesign it to align with the SDGs, involving the whole school community in considering the issues and potential solutions.<sup>36</sup>

- Plan, design and create a product, system or technology for your local area that will contribute towards achieving the targets of one or more of the SDGs. For some inspiration, learners could use resources from the Royal Academy of Engineering to investigate the innovations of the shortlisted entrants, finalists and winners of the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation. This award encourages and celebrates the work of ambitious and talented engineers in sub-Saharan Africa who are developing solutions to challenges in their local communities.<sup>37</sup> (All SDGs)
- Analyse ethical and sustainability issues in food systems, and social, economic, environmental and political factors affecting nutrition. (SDG 2)



#### English, Media Studies and Drama

- Write a leaflet or create a poster which persuades others to take action to protect life on land or below water. Learners should make their case clearly, effectively and persuasively, using concrete examples and supporting evidence. Alternatively, they could write and submit newspaper articles or send letters to a local business or their local government representative. (SDGs 14 and 15)
- Develop empathy, explore different perspectives and recognise the complexity of global issues by using role play or drama to convey SDG themes. For example, use hot-seating or freeze-frames to portray communities impacted by climate change or people forced to flee their homes by conflict. (All SDGs)
- Use a wide range of stories and texts from around the world to illuminate issues linked to the SDGs. See Signpost's *Global Citizenship through fiction* list<sup>38</sup> and Oxfam's *English and Global Citizenship guide*<sup>39</sup> for some suggested book titles. (All SDGs)
- Identify facts, opinions, stereotyping and bias in news reporting and the media. For example, use videos from the 'Radi-Aid Awards' to stimulate thinking and discussion around the stereotypes and assumptions that people often make in relation to poverty.<sup>40</sup> Alternatively, analyse images and stories related to women and men in the media according to criteria such as active versus passive characters, types of activity or stereotyping. (SDGs 1 and 5)

#### Geography/Modern Studies

- Think critically about the SDGs. What does sustainable development mean? Are the goals little more than a wish list, or are they a realistic set of targets for the world to aim for? Do they address the key global challenges faced by our planet, or are some issues missing? Do they prioritise economic growth over social and environmental aims? (All SDGs)
- Research different ways of measuring development. Collect and analyse data to identify within- and betweencountry inequalities and consider the possible causes for these gaps, as well as potential solutions. (SDG 10)
- Use a consequences wheel to think through the impacts of global challenges such as gender inequality or unequal access to education. For further details, see p.14 of *Oxfam's Global Citizenship in the Classroom: A guide for teachers.*<sup>41</sup> (All SDGs)

#### History

- Research and compare the characteristics of famines throughout history up to the present day. (SDG 2)
- Investigate significant events that have happened in relation to gender equality across the world and throughout history, and consider the significance of individual and collection action to achieve this. (SDG 5)
- Study the positive and negative impacts of industrialisation on society. This could be at a local, national and/or global level. Think critically about possible futures and the role of industry, innovation and infrastructure in creating these. (SDG 9)

#### **Mathematics**

- Find, interpret, present and manipulate data measuring progress towards the SDGs, such as statistics on access to clean water, electricity and education. See *Additional information and data sources* on p. 30. (All SDGs)
- Use the concept of sharing to explore what inequality means. Use ratios, fractions and percentages to express different equal and unequal distributions. (SDG 10)
- Collect data on your daily water consumption or energy use individually or for your class or school. Consider ways to reduce consumption, set targets and monitor progress towards these. (SDG 6)

#### Modern Foreign Languages

- Explore media coverage of different issues related to the SDGs in languages such as French, Spanish, German and Portuguese. Compare the media coverage in different countries. What are the similarities and differences in the coverage? What might be the reasons for any differences? (All SDGs)
- Create a travel guide to a country where the language being studied is spoken, and integrate as many sustainable tourism activities as possible. Consider and discuss whether tourism can be sustainable. (SDG 11)

#### **Music**

- Consider the role of music in challenging social injustice throughout history to the present day, such as in the US civil rights movement. See Oxfam's *Raising our Voices* resource for some activity ideas.<sup>42</sup> (SDG 16)
- Investigate other ways in which music is being used for positive change for example, the Recycled Orchestra of Cateura in Paraguay, which plays instruments made from landfill;<sup>43</sup> the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, which encourages peace by bringing together Israeli, Palestinian and other Arab musicians;<sup>44</sup> or the work of artist Pedro Reyes to transform decommissioned weapons into musical instruments. (SDGs 12 and 16)

#### Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education

- Reflect on the differences between needs, wants and rights. Consider what we need to be doing 'well' in life and how these needs relate to the SDGs. See Oxfam's *Children's Rights* resource for some creative classroom activities.<sup>45</sup> (All SDGs)
- Use the SDGs to support reflection on how useful it is to set goals. Consider what success means will the SDGs only be a success if they are achieved fully? Discuss the importance of qualities such as resilience, team work and adaptability in working towards goals. (All SDGs)
- Think critically about how the choices we make as consumers affect others' economies, environments and working lives. (SDGs 3, 8, 12 and 13)

#### **Physical Education**

- Use the context of sport to think about how fairness relates to rules. Learners could consider how rules could be used to make a sport more inclusive before coming up with their own rules for a 'fair' sporting event where everyone is able to take part. (SDGs 10 and 16)
- Consider the role and importance of a balanced diet and exercise in promoting good health and well-being. (SDG 3)
- Develop learners' understanding of the importance of teamwork for building trust among individuals and solving problems. (SDG 17)



#### **Religious Education**

- Examine the role of religious beliefs and faith-based organisations in working towards the alleviation of poverty. (SDG 1)
- Use different ideas about creation to prompt reflection and discussion about the vision learners have for their communities, both now and in the future. (SDG 11)
- Explore religious beliefs and teachings about peace and conflict, such as the values or testimonies of the Quaker Movement, or non-harming, one of the precepts underlying the Noble Eightfold Path in Buddhism. (SDG 16)

#### Science

- Use sand, small stones, grass and other natural materials to filter muddy water to get it as clean as possible. Learners could then consider whether the resultant clean-looking water is actually safe to drink. They could also research water-borne diseases and how to prevent them. Try *Ditch the Dirt* from Practical Action.<sup>46</sup> (SDG 6)
- Investigate marine food webs and the impacts that commercial fishing and plastic pollution have on them. (SDG 14)
- Do an audit around the school to identify sources of energy and then classify these as renewable or nonrenewable. Look for any examples of energy wastage and then consider ways in which energy could be used more effectively. (SDG 7)



#### **CASE STUDY** SCIENCE THROUGH THE SDGs

Meryl Batchelder is a Science teacher and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) club leader at Corbridge Middle School in Northumberland. She is committed to giving the young people at her school the opportunities and confidence to tackle big issues through the SDGs, helping to make learning real and motivating. Meryl has linked every topic in the KS2 and KS3 Science curricula to one or more of the SDGs – for example, by challenging learners to create their own wind-powered turbines (SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy – see Practical Action's *Wind Power Challenge*).<sup>47</sup> Learners are supported to understand the interrelated nature of the SDGs as much as possible; identifying and discussing any links between their learning and the SDGs is a common theme of plenary sessions.

#### CASE STUDY THE WINDOW PROJECT

A network of special schools in Wales worked together through the DFID-funded Global Learning Programme (2013–2018), which supported teaching and learning about global issues. Led by Ysgol Maes y Coed in Neath, this group consisted of 12 special schools from across Wales, which cater for learners with a wide range of additional learning needs.

The schools worked together on a project based around *Window,* a thought-provoking wordless book by Jeannie Baker about the changing environment. The pictures in the book show the view from the same window over 20 years, with the scene changing from wilderness and clear skies to an overcrowded, polluted city, and back to a more natural view. The project provided the opportunity for learners to explore the world through a sensory perspective. The illustrations were a stimulus for discussion, which helped learners to develop their literacy, communication and digital competency skills. Learners were supported to look through windows in their own localities and consider the environment around them as well as their as well as their aspirations for the future (SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities).



#### CASE STUDY USING AN EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT LENS IN THE EARLY YEARS

Staff at the School of Education at Liverpool John Moore's University have developed an Early Childhood Education for Sustainable Development framework to support learning in, about and for the environment. This framework is available to view via the Foundation Years website as a resource under the 'knowledge hub' section.<sup>48</sup>

A local provider adopting this framework is Poulton Penguins Nursey on the Wirral, which provides care and education for children aged from two years to school age. Educators used the picture book *Michael Recycle*, by Ellie Bethel and Alexandra Colombo, to promote learning, thinking and action linked to responsible consumption and production (SDG 12). Children used waste textiles and paper to create their own 'Michael Recycle' and 'Margaret Recycle', as well as to make other things such as flowers and vases. Other activities include sorting waste into 're-use', 'recycle' and 'compost'; growing fruit and vegetables; and recycling rainwater.

# Methodology toolbox

Below are examples of participatory approaches that work well in GCE and which can be applied to the SDG framework. UNESCO summarises other methodologies in its 2018 publication: *Preparing Teachers for Global Citizenship Education: A Template.*<sup>49</sup>

- Philosophy for Children (P4C) A methodology that works well with SDG themes, where young people explore a stimulus, create their own philosophical questions and then develop their thinking, reasoning and questioning skills through dialogue.<sup>50</sup>
- Enquiry-Based Learning An approach well known in Geography, where it is as much about what question is being asked (and how) as the topic being investigated. Margaret Roberts identifies four essential aspects for consideration when planning enquiry work: creating a need to know; using data; making sense; and reflecting on learning.<sup>51</sup>
- Systems thinking An emphasis on understanding how systems are created, function and can be changed or challenged (a system being a collection of parts that have influence on each other, with the idea being to understand how different parts interact with each other). This can be a good methodology when working with older learners and adult groups on projects that require exploration of the structural and historical causes of issues. See the Learning for Sustainability (LfS) website for some useful introductory reading.<sup>52</sup>
- **Project-based learning (PBL)** A learner-centred approach involving engagement with real-world challenges, requiring team work and expert thinking. A variety of recommendations for PBL practice are available online for example, Gaia Education takes a PBL learning approach.<sup>53</sup>
- Mantle of the Expert An approach that uses imaginary contexts to generate purposeful and engaging activities for learning, where teachers plan a fictional context and learners take on the responsibilities of an expert team.<sup>54</sup>
- Open Spaces for Dialogue and Enquiry methodology Suggested guidelines for creating 'open and safe spaces for dialogue and enquiry about global issues and perspectives focusing on interdependence'.<sup>55</sup>



# Further resources and support

There is a wealth of ideas for activities and educational approaches to the SDGs provided by charities and other organisations. It is important to consider resources critically and carefully, to avoid the promotion of stereotypes, especially around poverty, or an over-emphasis on charitable approaches, which can unintentionally undermine global citizenship and reinforce prejudices. For further guidance on choosing resources, see RISC's *What makes a good global citizenship resource*?<sup>56</sup>

- Oxfam has an extensive range of free, online GCE guides and resources which support a Learn-Think-Act approach to global issues, including those covered by the SDGs. For example, the *Teaching Controversial Issues* guide provides strategies, guidance and activities for navigating controversial SDG themes within the classroom. Useful teaching resources include: *Climate Challenge* (SDGs 7, 12 and 13), *Global Food Challenge* (SDGs 1 and 2) and *Everyone Counts* (SDG 10): www.oxfam.org.uk/education
- The following sites are searchable repositories of resources covering SDG themes:
- Global Dimension: globaldimension.org.uk
- Hwb: www.hwb.gov.wales/repository
- Signposts for Global Citizenship: www.signpostsglobalcitizenship.org
- Sustainable Development Goals Explorer: developmenteducation.ie/resources/sdgs/
- In-person professional development and training local Development Education Centres and other organisations, such as Oxfam, offer courses that support teachers to bring SDG themes into the classroom through GCE. Here are some examples:
- Oxfam (in England and Wales): www.oxfam.org.uk/education/get-involved/inset-workshops-for-schools
- In England: www.codec.org.uk/about-the-network
- In Scotland: www.ideas-forum.org.uk/about-us/decs
- In Wales: www.wcia.org.uk/global-learning
- In Northern Ireland: www.globallearningni.com
- The Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning (CCGL) programme supports schools around the world to learn about and collaborate on global issues through school linking, teacher training opportunities, classroom resources, funding and accreditation. The programme is a partnership between the British Council and the Department for International Development. Find out more about CCGL and how your school can get involved at: www.britishcouncil.org/connectingclassrooms
- The World's Largest Lesson website provides a wealth of background information on all of the SDGs, together with teaching tips, classroom activity ideas, and links to lesson plans, film clips and teaching packs: http://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org

# Other useful websites

- 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World: www.8020.ie
- Centre for Global Education: www.centreforglobaleducation.com
- Eco-Schools:
- www.eco-schools.org.uk (England);
- www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/sustainable-development-education/eco-schools (Scotland);
- www.keepwalestidy.cymru/pages/category/eco-schools (Wales);
- www.eco-schoolsni.org (Northern Ireland)
- Fairtrade Schools: schools.fairtrade.org.uk
- Global Schools Programme resources: www.globalschoolsprogram.org
- International School Award: schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/about-programmes/international-school-award
- Practical Action: practicalaction.org/schools
- Scotdec: www.scotdec.org.uk/resources
- SDG Academy: sdgacademy.org
- Stride Global Citizenship Magazine for Schools: www.stridemagazine.org.uk
- Sustainability and Environmental Education (SEEd): se-ed.co.uk/edu
- TeachSDGs movement: www.teachsdgs.org
- Teacher Education for Equity and Sustainability Network (TEESNet): teesnet.liverpoolworldcentre.org
- TES Sustainable Schools Award: www.wwf.org.uk/get-involved/schools/tes-sustainable-schools-award
- UK National Association for Environmental Education: naee.org.uk
- UN Sustainable Development Goals Project: www.unsdgproject.com
- UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award: www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools
- Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) Green Ambassadors: www.wwf.org.uk/get-involved/schools/green-ambassadors

# Additional information and data sources

- Atlas of Sustainable Development Goals: datatopics.worldbank.org/sdgatlas
- Bridge 47 Global Network for SDG 4.7: www.bridge47.org
- Gapminder: www.gapminder.org
- Global Goals: www.globalgoals.org
- The Joseph Rowntree Foundation: www.jrf.org.uk
- Office for National Statistics: www.ons.gov.uk
- Our World in Data's SDG Tracker: sdg-tracker.org
- SDG Network Scotland: www.globalgoals.scot
- *The World We'll Leave Behind: Grasping the Sustainability Challenge.* An accessible handbook that explores key issues, concepts and strategies for learning, talking and acting for sustainability. By B. Scott and P. Vare. (2018). Abingdon: Routledge.
- UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development (UKSSD): www.ukssd.co.uk
- UN Data: data.un.org
- UN Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform: sustainabledevelopment.un.org
- UN World Data Forum: undataforum.org
- UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals Resources for educators: en.unesco.org/themes/education/sdgs/material
- World Bank Open Data: data.worldbank.org

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Oxfam takes full responsibility for the final text.

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